Swadeshi fuel or gasohol

1604. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to produce Swadeshi fuel or gasohol by mixing ethanol, a by product from sugar industry, with petrol;

(b) if so, to what extent it will reduce the dependence on imported crude oil; and

(c) whether gasohol will be cost effective and at what cost it will be made available to consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas *vide* Gazette Notification No. G.S.R. 580(E) dated 20.9.2006 has directed that subject to commercial viability, oil marketing companies shall sell 5 per cent Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP), as per Bureau of Indian Standards specification, in the notified 20 States and 4 Union Territories w.e.f. 1.11.2006.

(b) At present, India imports about 76% of crude oil. The quantity of ethanol used for blending with petrol will substitute an equivalent quantity of petrol produced from crude oil. However, ethanol blending with petrol may not have a commensurate impact on the import of crude oil by the refineries, particularly in the short run, as it will depend on the product mix, feasibility of product exports and extent of capacity utilization by each refinery.

(c) The retail-selling price of 5% Ethanol Blended Petrol is the same as the retail-selling price of Petrol.

Attraction of tourists to India

1605. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is still not the preferred destination for tourists in South Asia as issues such as shortage of accommodation, delay in issue of visas, high tax rate and poor infrastructure have not been addressed;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Indian tourism industry is grappling with the problem of shortage of accommodation and tourists are not attracted to India due to the high rate of taxation and the sky rocketing average room rates; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to attract the tourists to India?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The tourist traffic from South East Asia has shown an increase of 15.4% in 2005 in respect of the year 2004.

(b) The tourist arrivals in the previous years have been as under:

Year	Foreign Tourist Arrivals	Percentage increase
2003	2.72 million	14.3%
2004	3.46 million	26.8%
2005	3.92 million	13.2%
2006	4.43 million	13%

(c) Does not arise.

Promotion of medical tourism

1606. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:
SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether medical tourism in the country is growing 30 per cent annually;

(b) whether small countries like Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia are attracting ten times the medical tourist traffic than India in spite of the country having the price advantage expertise in the field of medicine;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) in what manner India is encashing the advantage it has, in terms of low waiting period when compared to 2-3 weeks in UK, US and Europe;